Let's have a Highlights Puzzle Party!

Inside this exclusive activity kit curated by Jodi Jill, founder of National Puzzle Day (January 29th), you'll find everything you need to run a Puzzle Party.

1. An interview with Jodi Jill, founder of National Puzzle Day.
2. Puzzle activities including a collaborative crossword puzzle game, a maze-making activity, and instructions for creating a super silly breakfast riddle!
3. Puzzles! We've included lots of Highlights puzzles appropriate for kids 7+.
4. An answer key for the puzzles.

Fun for the Whole Family

Join us for the first Highlights Puzzle Party! This exciting activity kit is perfect for kids 7+ and their families. Dive into fun challenges, unleash your creativity, and celebrate the joy of puzzling together!

What to Expect

- **Warm-Up Puzzles**: Start with That's a Lotta Axolotls! (pg. 5). Can you solve it in just 2 minutes?
- **Collaborative Fun**: Work together on activities like making your maze or building a crossword with a twist (you'll even use paper plates!).
- **Solo or Group Challenges:** Solve puzzles at your own pace or team up for even more fun.

What You'll Need

Grab your pencils, markers, crayons and paper plates, and bring your creative energy to jump into fun activities!

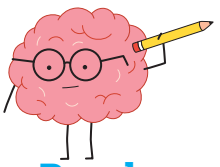
Share the Fun!

We'd love to see your Puzzle Party photos! Share them on social media and tag @highlightsforchildren with the hashtag #PuzzleParty for a chance to be featured on our channels. Happy Puzzling!

© 2025 Highlights for Children, Inc.

Q&A WITH PUZZLE DAY FOUNDER

National Puzzle Day Founder Jodi Jill and her dog, June Bug



My Job: Making Puzzles For People

What kind of puzzles do you make?

I create many types of puzzles for people to solve. Word puzzles, math puzzles, illusion puzzles, and even jigsaw puzzles. The type of puzzle I create depends on the audience who will solve the puzzle.

How many puzzles have you made?

I've made over 8,000 puzzles for people to solve. They've been published in magazines, posted online, distributed to classrooms, and other places.

If I wanted to have a job making puzzles, where would I start?

To create puzzles as a livelihood, the best way to start is by playing puzzles. You need to understand how puzzles work and the rules for solving them. When you're ready to start creating puzzles, practice is key. It takes time to create puzzles people can solve.

On Puzzle Day

Why did you create National Puzzle Day?

I created Puzzle Day to share my love of puzzles with the world. In the beginning, I made and gave puzzles away to kids, parents, and teachers who love puzzles too.

Why is National Puzzle Day on January 29th?

Let me tell you a little secret (get closer because I am going to whisper): it's my birthday. You know how we all love gifts on our special day? Well, my gift is sharing the thing I love the most with the world . . . PUZZLES. It's the best ever!

How did January become National Puzzle Month?

January is a great month for puzzles! It's a colder month of the year, and people want to have fun inside. Puzzles are perfect for playing inside. And, since Puzzle Day is the 29th, it seems quite fitting.

How do you celebrate National Puzzle Day?

My Puzzle Day celebrations are full of puzzle-giving. Not only do I offer puzzles to people, I encourage people to have puzzle parties and help find new puzzles to play. I talk to thousands of people about puzzles on Puzzle Day.

What makes National Puzzle Day so special?

Puzzles, of course! It's that one day a year where you explore new puzzles with friends and family. Or play a puzzle you love. It's just an awesome puzzle day!

On Puzzles

What is your favorite puzzle?

I enjoy all types of puzzles. I love to solve puzzles, as the challenges make my brain think.

Do you play puzzles by yourself or with friends?

I like playing puzzles both ways. I really love going to puzzle events where I can play with friends and other puzzle enthusiasts. If I'm feeling like a quick puzzle, I might hang out with the dog at home and play a puzzle with her.

Where is the weirdest place you've played puzzles?

The airplane! When flying high above the earth, I pull down my tray table and start playing my puzzle. It's a fun place to play a puzzle.

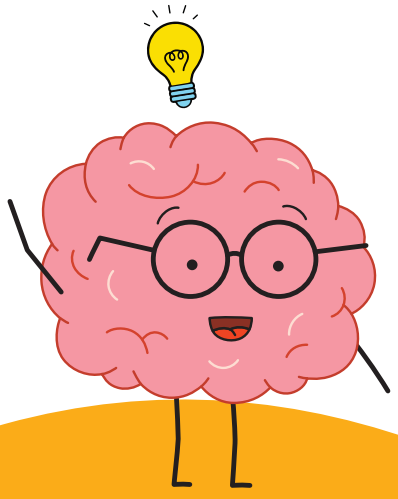
© 2025 Highlights for Children, Inc.

PAPER PLATE CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Any number of kids can play a Paper Plate Crossword Puzzle!
To start, each player chooses a word that is 4-6 letters long. They write the word on the paper plates, one letter per plate. Each player lays the plates on the table to form the word they want to share. Then, as in a crossword grid, players connect with the words through shared letters.

ACTIVITY SUPPLIES:

7" Paper Plates with 6 Paper Plates per Player.



What words could finish this crossword?

Each player takes turns placing the plates in the crossword puzzle, using their spelling skills and spelling to try to connect all the words. The goal is to include every word in the interactive crossword puzzle layout. It's a great way to practice spelling, teamwork, and problem-solving skills!

© 2025 Jodi Jill

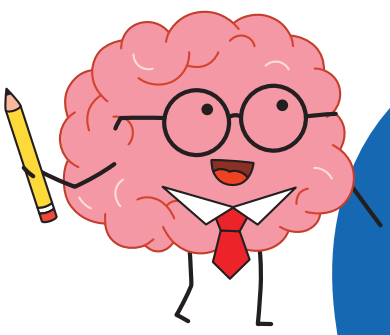
MAKE YOUR OWN MAZE

ACTIVITY SUPPLIES:

Pencil

START

FINISH



To make your maze, start by drawing straight lines inside the box to create walls. These walls can go up, down, left, or right, but not diagonal. Then block some of the paths to create dead ends. But don't forget to leave a path for the player to get to the exit! The path should be tricky, so the player must think about which way to go to solve your maze.

© 2025 Jodi Jill

THAT'S A LOTTA AXOLOTLS!

In two minutes or less, can you find the two columns with the exact same axolotls?

Art by Getty Images.

60-SECOND STUMPER

The letters in AXOLOTL can be used to make other words. Use the clues to come up with a few.

1. A ring-shaped island: _ _ _ _ _
2. A hammer is one: _ _ _ _
3. Opposite of short: _ _ _ _
4. Cars can park in one: _ _ _

© 2025 Highlights for Children, Inc.

© 2025 Highlights for Children, Inc.

MAKE A WISH

Find the **16** hidden objects in the image below.

Art by Lee Cosgrove

open book

cane

drumstick

drinking straw

kite

magnifying glass

sock

bird

banana

olive

carrot

pine tree

broccoli

fish

envelope

mushroom

© 2025 Highlights for Children, Inc.

LIBRARY LAUGHS

Solve each problem. Then go to the shelves to find the book with the number that matches each answer. Write the matching letter in the blank beside each answer. Read the letters you've filled in going from top to bottom to find the title and author of a silly book.

6 × 3 =	18	R
9 + 6 =		
14 ÷ 7 =		
19 – 14 =		
11 + 2 =		
21 ÷ 21 =		
14 – 3 =		
3 × 3 =		
9 + 5 =		
21 ÷ 3 =		
8 – 6 =		
5 × 5 =		
10 × 2 =		
20 ÷ 4 =		
9 + 9 =		
21 – 3 =		
19 + 6 =		
24 ÷ 8 =		
4 × 3 =		
8 + 7 =		
4 × 5 =		
11 – 3 =		

Art by Shutterstock/WinWin artlab

© 2025 Highlights for Children, Inc.

HAVE A SEAT

There are 12 students in this class: Aiden, Brian, Carlos, Dave, Eric, Frank, Grace, Haley, Iris, Jada, Katie, and Lily. Use the clues below to figure out which seat belongs to which kid.

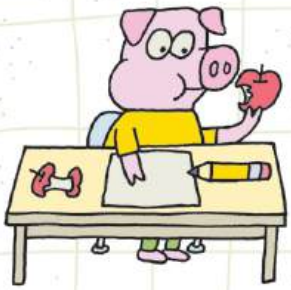
1. Dave sits in the seat farthest from the clock.

2. Brian sits between Lily and Katie and in front of Haley.

3. Eric sits between Haley and Jada, in front of Iris, and behind Lily.

4. Jada sits in front of Frank and behind Dave.

5. Grace sits in a corner behind Carlos.

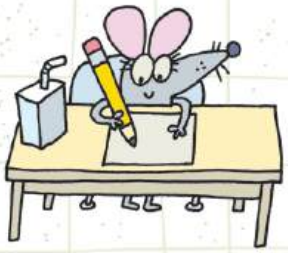


1 _____

2 _____

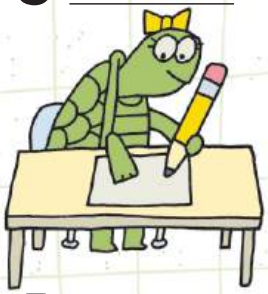
3 _____

4 _____



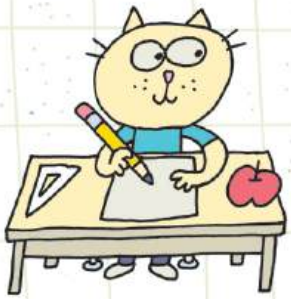
5 _____

6 _____



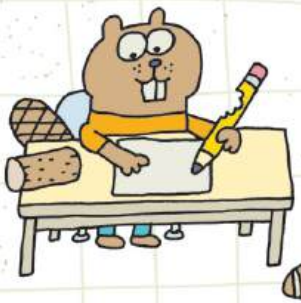
7 _____

8 _____

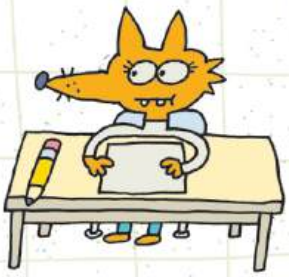


9 Dave

10 _____



11 _____



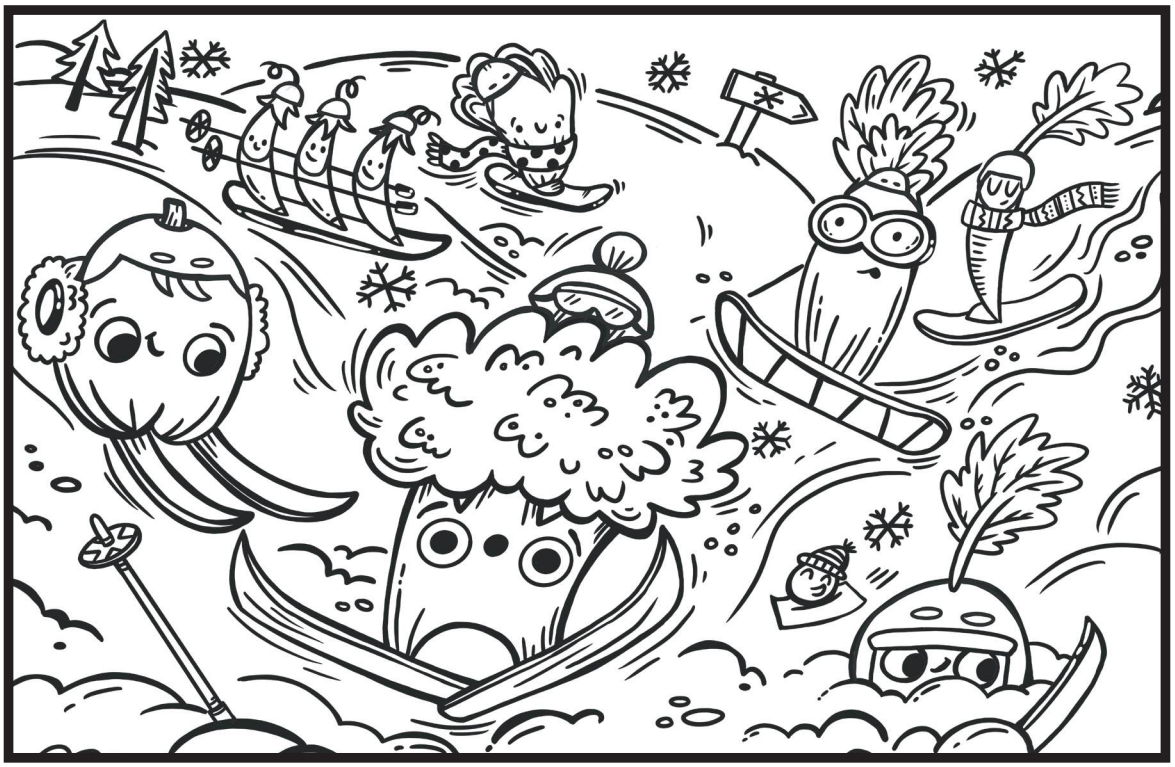
12 _____

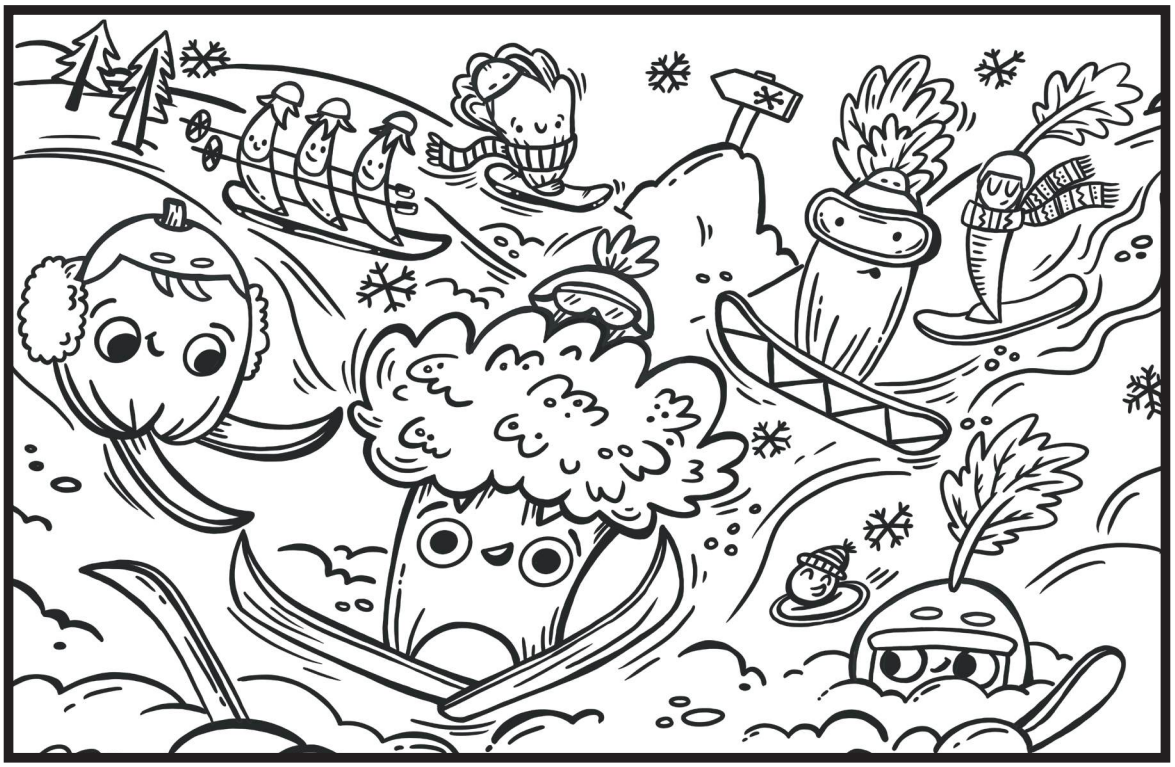
Art by Travis Foster

© 2025 Highlights for Children, Inc.

VEGGIES AND FRUIT

These vegetables are enjoying the crisp, fresh air. Can you find at least **14** differences between these two pictures?



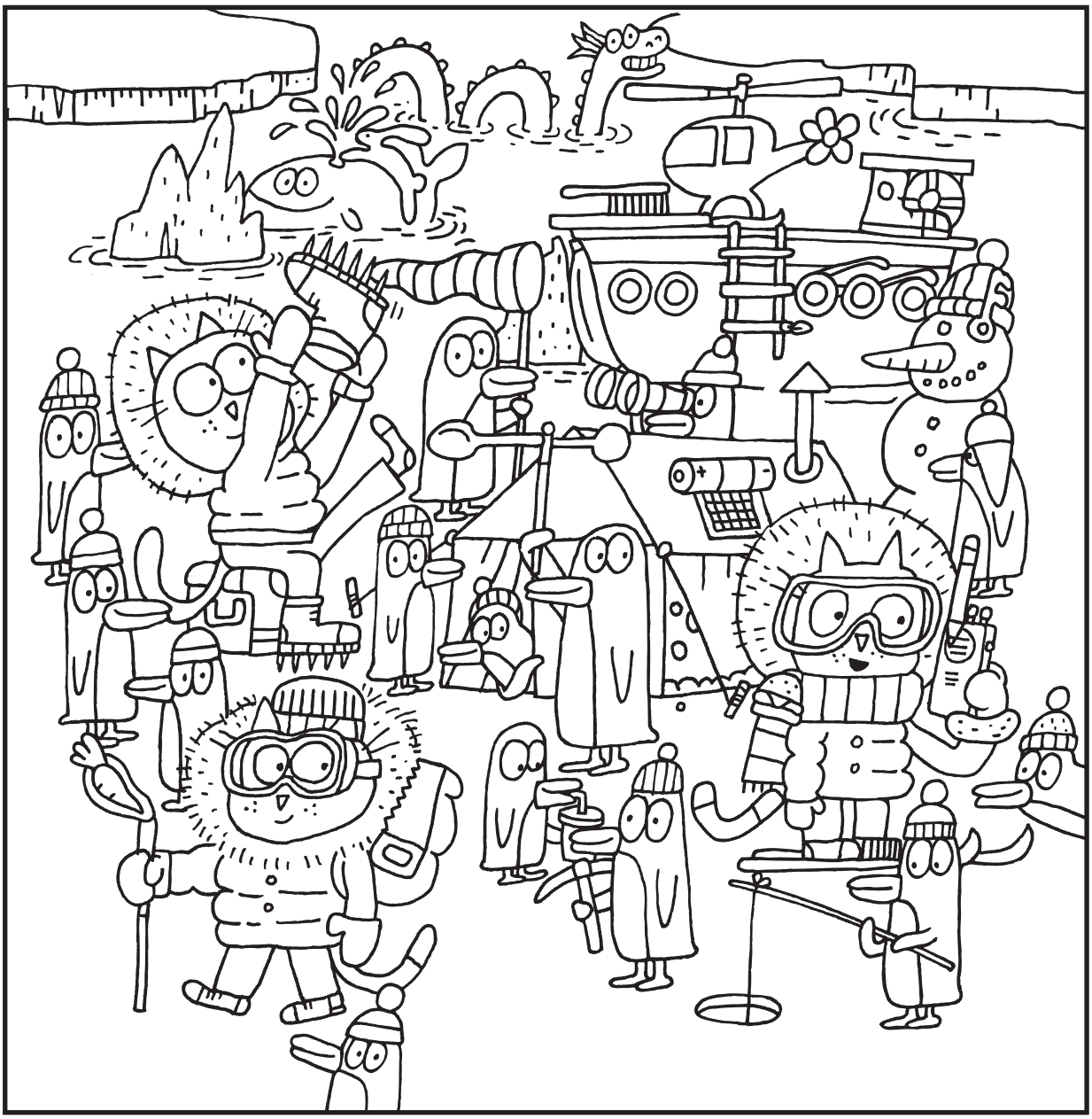


Art by Jana Curll

© 2025 Highlights for Children, Inc.

COOL CATS

Find the **25** hidden objects in the image below.



Art by Travis Foster

ice-cream cone

spoon

battery

banana

pickle

sock

comb

flower

toothbrush

hairbrush

shoe

ruler

sneaker

baseball bat

pencil

saw

eyeglasses

candle

slice of pizza

rabbit

boomerang

saucepan

carrot

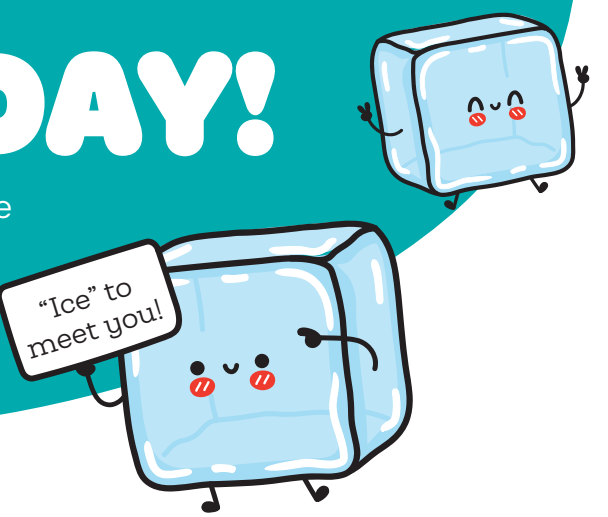
cheeseburger

key

© 2025 Highlights for Children, Inc.

HAVE AN ICE DAY!

Circle the words or phrases containing *ICE* hidden in the grid. The word *ICE* has been replaced with a ▢. Look down, across, and diagonally.



W	O	E	W	J	U	S	T	▢	E	N	T
S	F	T	C	H	O	▢	H	E	R	E	Y
E	F	M	▢	B	E	R	G	E	S	T	E
R	▢	A	O	R	▢	S	K	A	T	E	D
V	S	G	N	P	A	I	R	O	F	D	▢
▢	L	N	T	▢	A	S	Y	T	O	D	▢
A	▢	I	H	Y	P	W	O	V	E	A	P
▢	O	F	I	R	E	O	G	L	O	O	A
F	F	▢	N	I	N	G	P	B	S	▢	C
I	P	N	▢	▢	C	U	B	E	O	T	K
S	I	T	W	L	I	▢	B	O	X	N	▢
H	E	G	B	R	E	A	K	T	H	E	▢

WORDS

~~ICEBERG~~
OFFICE
SOLSTICE
CHOICE
ICEBOX
JUSTICE
SERVICE
ICE SKATE
VOICE
MAGNIFICENT
PAIR OF DICE
ICE CUBE
SLICE OF PIE
BREAK THE ICE
ICE POP
ON THIN ICE
ICE PACK
ICE FISH

BONUS!

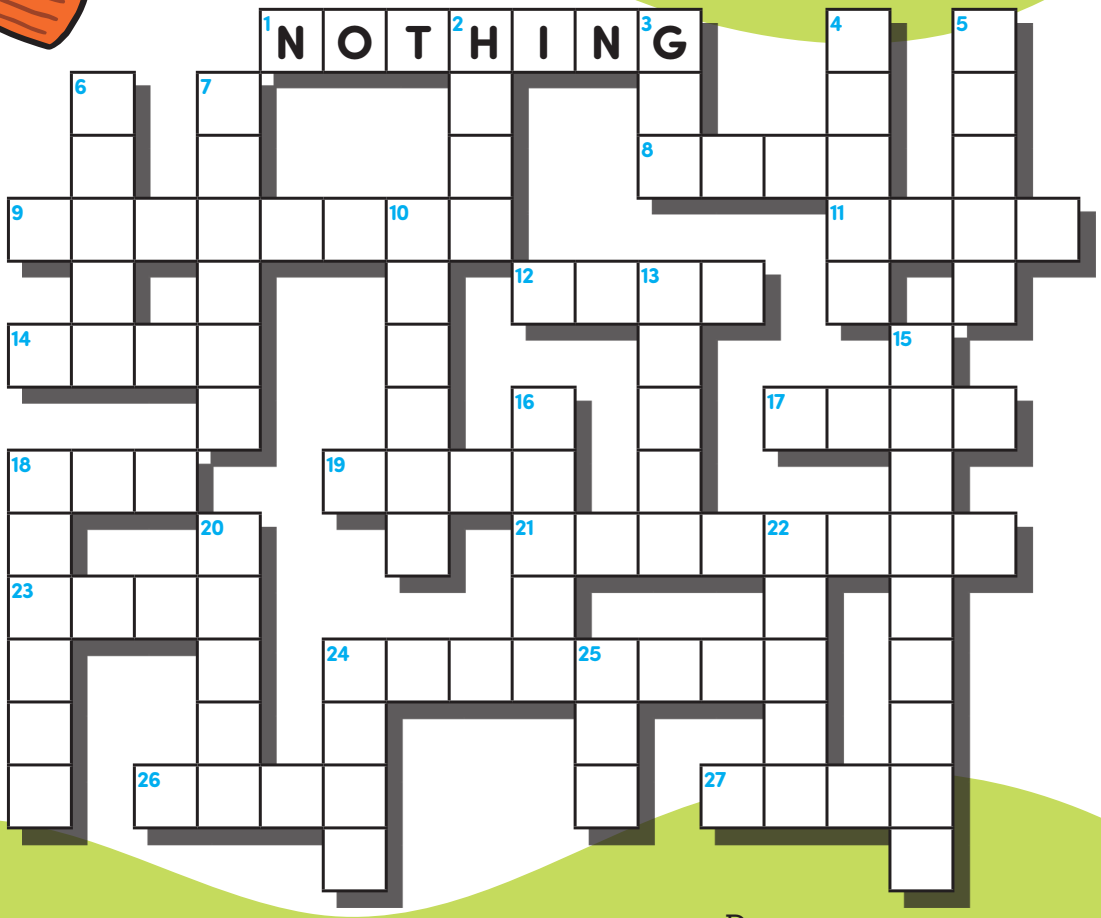
Put the uncircled letters in order on the blank spaces below to finish the joke.

A police officer stopped a person who was driving with two penguins in the back seat. The police officer said, "Why don't you take those penguins to the zoo?" The person replied,

"_ _ _ _

GO TEAM!

In this crossword, every answer is made up of letters from the phrase **GAME-WINNING TOUCHDOWN**. We scored the first word for you. Fill in the rest of the answers to win the game!



Art by Greg Kletsel

Across

1. Zilch, nada, zip
8. It could be full or crescent-shaped.
9. 12:00 a.m.
11. Where a pet bird might live
12. Opposite of bad
14. Food that comes in a tortilla
17. Twelve hours after 9 Across
18. What a dog does with its tail
19. A nickel or a dime
21. Opposite of guilty
23. One-twelfth of a foot
24. It might be snow-capped.
26. Not nice
27. A cat noise

Down

2. An owl's call
3. Jewel
4. Move to music
5. It helps a door open and shut.
6. Beijing is its capital.
7. Curtains might hang around this.
10. Popular baseball park food
13. Atlantic or Pacific
15. 5... 4... 3... 2... 1...
16. A veggie that makes you cry
18. How heavy something is
20. The color of snow
22. A narrow boat with paddles
24. Long horse hair
25. "_____, you're it!"

© 2025 Highlights for Children, Inc.

KITTY CLUES

Katrina has four cats: Furnando, Clawdia, Purrcy, and Mewbacca. Using the clues, can you figure out each cat's favorite toy and activity?

CLUES:

1. Purrcy loves the jingle ball.
2. The cat who does 2:00 a.m. zoomies loves cardboard boxes.
3. Mewbacca enjoys milk jug caps, but does not lay on Katrina's keyboard.
4. The cat who loves the feather wand glares at birds.
5. Clawdia does not care for cardboard boxes.

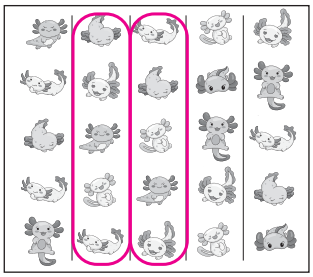
Put an X in each box that can't be true and an O in boxes that are true.	Jingle Ball	Feather wand	cardboard box	milk jug cap	Knocking things off tables	Doing zoomies at 2:00 a.m.	Laying on Katrina's keyboard while she's working	Glaring at birds through the window
Furnando								
Clawdia								
Purrcy								
Mewbacca								

Art by iStock/Getty Images Plus/Svetlana Kharchuk

© 2025 Highlights for Children, Inc.

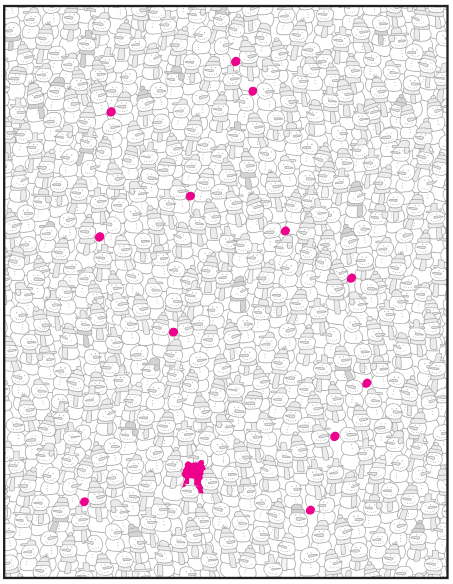
ANSWER KEY

THAT'S A LOTTA AXOLOTLS!

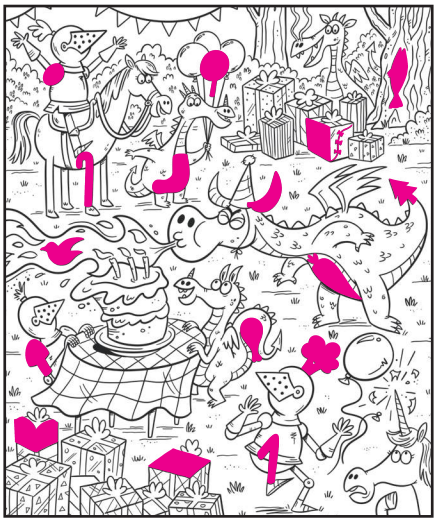


BONUS: 60-SECOND STUMPER
1. ATOLL
2. TOOL
3. TALL
4. LOT

SNOW MANIA



MAKE A WISH



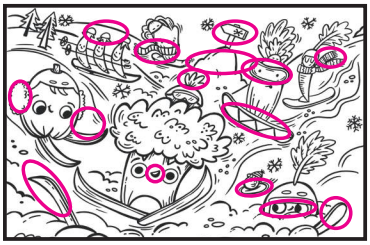
LIBRARY LAUGHS

6 X 3 = 18	R	8 – 6 = 2	B
9 + 6 = 15	O	5 x 5 = 25	Y
14 ÷ 7 = 2	B	10 x 2 = 20	T
19 – 14 = 5	E	20 ÷ 4 = 5	E
11 + 2 = 13	M	9 + 9 = 18	R
21 ÷ 21 = 1	A	21 – 3 = 18	R
14 – 3 = 11	K	19 + 6 = 25	Y
3 x 3 = 9	I	24 ÷ 8 = 3	C
9 + 5 = 14	N	4 x 3 = 12	L
21 ÷ 3 = 7	G	8 + 7 = 15	O
		4 x 5 = 20	T
		11 – 3 = 8	H

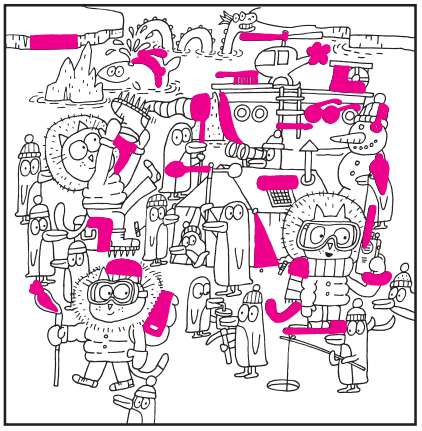
HAVE A SEAT

1. Frank
2. Iris
3. Aiden
4. Grace
5. Carlos
6. Haley
7. Eric
8. Jada
9. Dave
10. Lily
11. Brian
12. Katie

VEGGIES AND FRUIT



COOL CATS



HAVE AN ICE DAY!

page 18

W	O	E	W	S	P	E	D	E	N	T				
S	F	T	C	H	O	H	E	R	E	Y				
E	F	M	B	E	R	G	E	S	T	E				
R	A	O	R	S	K	A	T	E	D					
V	S	G	N	P	A	I	R	O	F	D				
S	L	N	T	A	S	Y	T	O	D					
A	I	H	Y	P	W	O	V	E	A	P				
O	F	I	R	E	O	G	L	O	O	A				
F	F	N	I	N	G	P	B	S	C					
I	P	N	C	U	B	E	O	T	K					
S	I	T	W	L	I	B	O	X	N					
H	E	G	B	R	E	A	K	T	H	E				

WE WENT THERE YESTERDAY.
TODAY WE ARE GOING BOWLING!

GO TEAM!

				N	O	T	H	I	N	G		D		H
	C		W				O		E			A		I
	H		I				O		M	O	O	N		N
M	I	D	N	I	G	H	T					C	A	G	E
	N		D			O		G	O	O	D		E		E
T	A	C	O			T			C				C		
			W			D		O		E		N	O	O	N
W	A	G			C	O	I	N		A				U	
E			W			G		I	N	N	O	C	E	N	T
I	N	C	H					O			A		T		
G			I		M	O	U	N	T	A	I	N		D	
H			T			A				A		O		O	
T		M	E	A	N					G		M	E	O	W
					E									N	

KITTY CLUES

FURNANDO: Cardboard box and zoomies
CLAWDIA: Feather wand and glaring at birds
PURRCY: Jingle ball and laying on keyboard
MEWBACCA: Milk jug cap and knocking things off tables

© 2025 Highlights for Children, Inc.